

Worksession

Agenda Item #	6
Meeting Date	23 April 2007
Prepared By	Ilon Blanchard Senior Planner
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager

Discussion Item	SHA Plans for Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Improvements at the Crossroads
Background	<p>In December of 2006, the State Highway Administration (SHA) issued an order to proceed with construction along New Hampshire Avenue, from Merrimac Drive to Holton Lane, and along University Boulevard, from Lebanon Street to 14th Street. The project included the installation of a number of pedestrian safety improvements and the resurfacing of the roadway. A second phase of the project includes the installation of a transit center on the northwest corner of the intersection currently occupied by a Taco Bell fast food restaurant.</p> <p>The initial phase of this project was reviewed by the Council and its comments were provided to both the State Highway Administration and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission as part of the mandatory referral process. State Highway Administration representatives met with the Council to present the project design and answer questions. A resolution of support for the project, included as an attachment, was adopted by the Council on March 13, 2006.</p> <p>The Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority, Inc. (CDA), having recently learned that the median fencing located along University Boulevard did not extend to the crosswalk in the vicinity of the Rite Aide, has expressed its concern to SHA and asked that the fencing be installed to this intersection to improve the safety of pedestrians crossing mid-block in this area. A resolution supporting the installation of a fence at this location was adopted by the CDA Board on April 12, 2007.</p> <p>Staff has been advised that a decision regarding the CDA's request will not be made by SHA until next winter. If approved and incorporated into the existing construction plans, the fencing would not be installed until spring of 2008. The decision is largely dependent upon the outcome of the State's negotiations to acquire property for the planned transit center, as that phase of the project may result in the installation of a traffic signal with travel lanes in the location of the proposed fence. An alternative proposal would be to install extensive landscaping along the median, similar to that in downtown Silver Spring.</p>
Policy	<p>Recommendations included in the Takoma Park Master Plan, adopted December 2000, which apply to this project include the following:</p> <p><i>Pedestrian System:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pedestrian access to shopping areas, transit, and community facilities by providing wide, tree-lined sidewalks and good street crossings through the area. Improve crossings with pedestrian signals and limitation on right turns, where appropriate.

	<i>University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue Streetscapes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tree-lined sidewalks, landscaped medians, and street trees in wide panels separating sidewalks from traffic. Provide on-road bikeways and “shared use paths” (8-foot to 10-foot-wide sidewalks) on both sides.
Fiscal Impact	None
Attachments	Resolution 2006 - 15: Supporting Pedestrian Safety Improvements to University Boulevard (MD 193) and New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650)
Recommendation	Discuss design revisions supported by the CDA
Special Consideration	

Introduced by: Councilmember Barry

Resolution No. 2006-15

**Resolution Supporting Pedestrian Safety Improvements
to University Boulevard (MD 193) and New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650)**

WHEREAS, the State Highway Administration (SHA) developed a design for pedestrian improvements to University Boulevard (MD 193) and New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650), an area known as the Takoma/Langley Crossroads; and,

WHEREAS, construction of the improvements is scheduled to go out to bid in October 2006; and,

WHEREAS, a portion of this project is located within the boundaries of the City of Takoma Park and the project as a whole will affect residents and businesses of the City; and,

WHEREAS, pedestrian safety is a City priority; and,

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park Master Plan, approved and adopted December 2000, recommends the provision of “tree-lined sidewalks, landscaped medians, and street trees in wide panels separating sidewalks from traffic”; and,

WHEREAS, the Master Plan further recommends the provision of “on-road bikeways and ‘shared use paths’ (8-foot to 10-foot wide sidewalks) on both sides”; and,

WHEREAS, the Council finds that, while the proposed design would improve pedestrian safety in this densely developed and heavily trafficked area, elements of the design are not in compliance with the specific recommendations of the Master Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND:

1. Expresses appreciation that the project has been funded and is moving forward, providing significant improvements for pedestrians and transit users; and,
2. Supports marking the crosswalk across University Boulevard at Lebanon and urges the consideration of additional features such as in-roadway lighting, overhead warnings, or other mechanisms; and,
3. Supports installing wide sidewalks with a landscaped buffer to meet the Master Plan’s recommendations, where feasible, and encourages SHA to work with adjoining property owners and utilities to obtain necessary access; and,

4. Supports the expansion of the sidewalk at the southwest corner of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue by further shortening the island and the slip lane on the west side; and,
5. Supports the addition of a crosswalk at all four sides of the intersection at the entrance to the proposed transit center.

Adopted this 13th day of March 2006.

Attest:

Jessie Carpenter
City Clerk